

Jesus Christ – the Suffering Servant

Introduction

- A. In the days before the celebration of the Resurrection many people find themselves living in the shadow of the cross.
- B. All Christians recognize there was more than human suffering at Calvary – there was something unique – a divine-human transaction.
- C. Isaiah, through divine inspiration, has given us a prophetic picture of Jehovah's Suffering Servant, (Is. 42:1,19; 43:10; 49:6; 52:13; Matt. 12:18-21). He is our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. In the text, Isaiah 52:13-15, we have the prophet's introduction and summary of the Savior's suffering and triumph.

I. The Centrality of the Servant, V12A.

Behold, my servant. . . .

Comment: We are here reminded that the plan of God, and the gospel, revolves around a person – Jesus Christ. There is no other Lord, Redeemer, or Savior than He. To be in the center of God's will we must give Him the preeminence (Col. 1:18).

We are told to "Behold" Him, i.e. understand Who He is and give Him His rightful place in our life.

Is. 42:1 – Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect...

Is. 52:13 – Behold, my servant shall deal prudently ...

Zech. 9:9 – Behold, thy King cometh unto thee ...

Matt. 21:5 – Behold, thy King cometh unto thee ...

John 1:29 – Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

II. The Predicted Success of the Servant, V13B.

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

Comment: The Hebrew word translated "prudently" combines the thought of wisdom and prosperity. It can be paraphrased as "acting wisely in order to prosper." The verse refers to the way the Lord Jesus chose to do the will of His Father even though it meant the Crucifixion. His obedience made possible His exaltation.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:8-11

III. The Amazing Suffering of the Servant, V14.

As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.

Comment: The suffering of the Savior in the beatings by the guards, the scourging, and the crucifixion completely distorted His features. We must remember there was more than physical suffering involved – His greatest agony was spiritual.

The New Testament commentary on the Crucifixion explains the reason behind the suffering of the Savior.

For he (God) hath made him (the Lord Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. II Cor. 5:21

IV. The Spiritual Goal of the Servant, V15A.

So shall he sprinkle many nations

Comment: The word "sprinkle" is often used in the Old Testament to indicate a spiritual cleansing.

And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the vail of the sanctuary. Lev. 4:6

And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean. Lev. 14:7

Our text reminds us that the death of the Lord Jesus was not only substitutionary (dying in our place), but also vicarious (the value could be transferred to others).

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Titus 2:14; 3:5

V. The Human Astonishment at the Servant, V15B.

The kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Comment: The amazement of the kings, and thus all below them, is due to how the Servant, through such an insignificant life when measured by human value -- and such a horrible death -- could be exalted so high and bring such benefits to so many. All of us will realize that the carpenter in Nazareth was really the Lord God Almighty.